Event Intelligence Playbook

5 Steps to Maximizing Your Event ROI

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Introduction

Event marketing can account for a sizable piece of a company's marketing budget, so this type of expenditure naturally draws a lot of scrutiny from CFOs and CEOs. Event marketers must prove return on investment (ROI) to secure funds for future marketing endeavors.

Before the advent of robust digital event technology, collecting event data to support ROI was more challenging. There was a greater dependence on analog data, requiring more manual labor and greater cooperation from event attendees. Inevitably the quality of the data collected could range widely, and attributing outcomes to specific touchpoints within an event could be impossible.

While event data collection has become much easier, event marketers can now face an opposite problem; data overload. Digital technology makes it possible to collect information from every point where event guests engage with your content, brand, and programming.

A marketer needs to set goals, select the right marketing attribution model, and align the marketing team around a unified strategy to turn event data into actual **event intelligence** that supports a higher ROI. If this all sounds a bit daunting, set your worries aside; this playbook was written to help marketers like you.

Step 1: Define Your Event Goals & Success Metrics

Without clear goals for your events, you will be less equipped to measure the success of your program or identify areas that need improvement. Having meaningful goals in place before launching an event helps you:

1
Define What **Success** Should Look Like

2
Monitor Your Event Goals and Ensure That You Do Not Veer Off Track

3
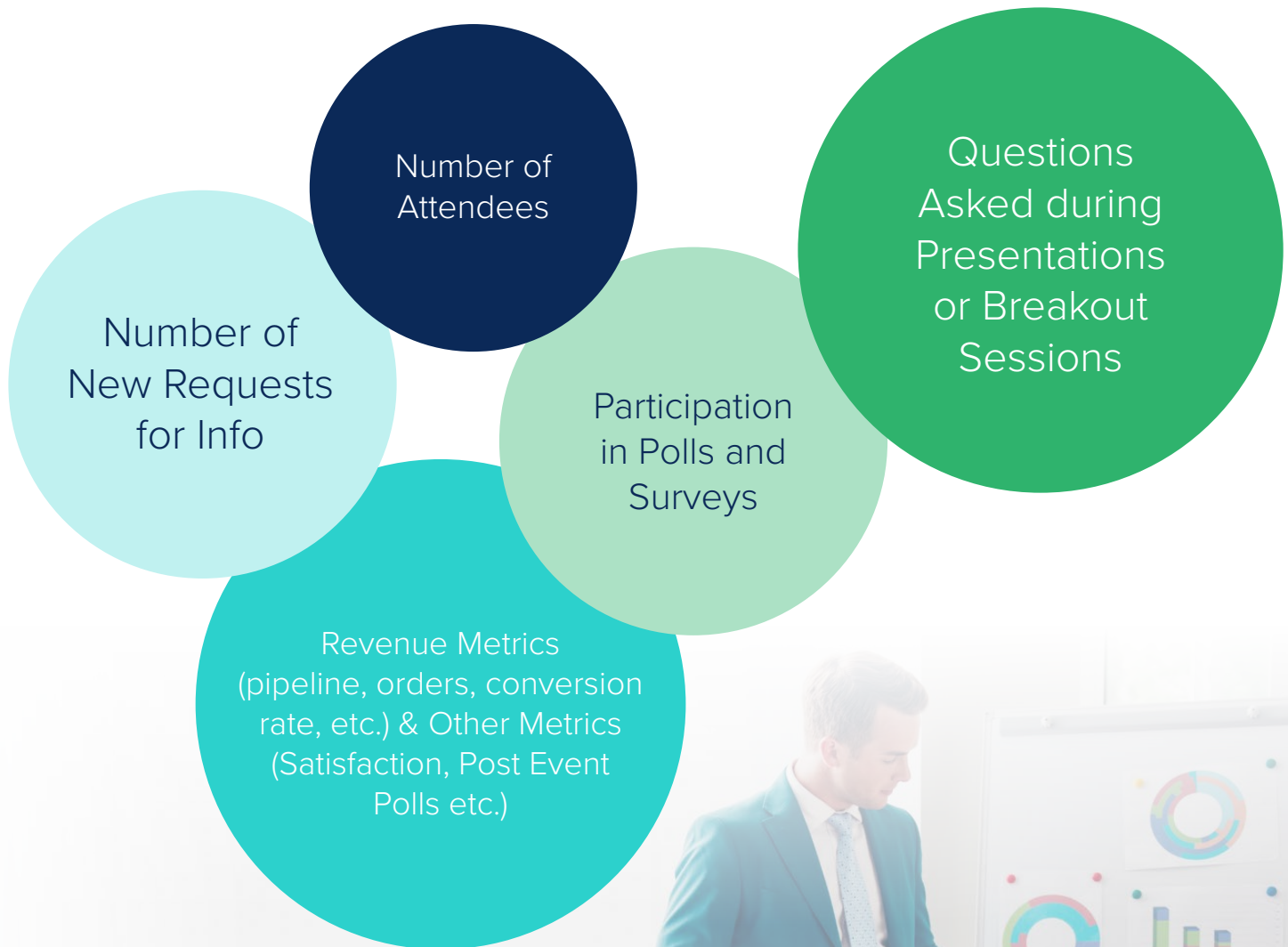Focus Tasks and Activities Where They are Likely to Have the Most **Significant** Impact

4
Drive **Accountability** Across Every Part of Your Event

Step 1: Define Your Event Goals & Success Metrics

Once you've identified your goals and painted a clear picture of what a successful outcome should be, you will need to decide what to measure; these data will become your **success metrics**. For example, if your event goal is to boost your ROI and *increase attendee engagement* you could measure:

Number of Attendees

Questions Asked during Presentations or Breakout Sessions

Number of New Requests for Info

Participation in Polls and Surveys

Revenue Metrics (pipeline, orders, conversion rate, etc.) & Other Metrics (Satisfaction, Post Event Polls etc.)

Step 1: Define Your Event Goals & Success Metrics

To achieve an accurate 360-degree view of your success metrics, you will want to use an end-to-end Event Management and Intelligence solution that will allow you to easily collect, analyze, and monitor a multitude of attendee data such as:

Registration Data
Topics and areas of interest, business priorities, goals for attending, pre-event surveys, interest in new products and services

Event Demographic Data
Influence of Event attributes, location on success metrics and conversion from registration to attendance to engagement

Behavioral Data
Time in sessions, engagement in surveys, polls, Q&A, and discussion threads

Demographic Data
Contact details, industry, job title and job level, location, organization data, experience and skillsets)

Event Quantitative Data
Conversion from Registration to Attendance and Engagement by session, event, attendee attributes, and multivariate analysis

Buyer Intent
Session selections and reviews, networking preferences, and engagement

Step 1: Define Your Event Goals & Success Metrics

The Bigger Picture

For marketers to truly understand the impact of their event marketing program, it's important to clarify the various **metrics** needed to measure the success of an individual event versus the full events program. By identifying and understanding the patterns of your audience's behavior and engagement, you are able to tell the full story of your global events program.

For example: By defining both the micro and macro levels of your event goals and success metrics, you can not only offer a clear picture of your events program success, but also make informed decisions about future event goals, content and audiences. Having this holistic view of your event data ensures that your event marketing strategy is on point.

Who is attending your events?

What are their roles, industries, needs, interests and pain points?

How are they joining?

?

When are they attending, dropping off, engaging?

Why are they attending your event(s)?

Where are they joining from?

By identifying and understanding the patterns of your audience's behavior and engagement, you are able to tell the full story of your global events program.

Step 2: Identify the Right Attribution Model to Make Your Event Data Truly Actionable

The next step to making the event data you gather truly actionable is **selecting an appropriate attribution model**. An attribution model is an effective tool for determining which touchpoints before, during, and after an event contributed to a specific outcome. Such attribution is critical for accurately measuring and proving event ROI.

Following an attribution model has several other benefits beyond measuring event ROI. The data gathered allows a marketer to improve the personalization of the attendee experience and customize content delivery. This inevitably helps to increase conversion rates. It also enables optimization of marketing budgets since you will clearly see what is driving the best outcomes and allocate dollars toward those activities.

Step 2: Identify the Right Attribution Model to Make Your Event Data Truly Actionable

There are myriad attribution models in use; which one you choose depends on the needs of your business and what you seek to measure. Below are two models that are useful for event marketers:

Single-Touch Attribution – (STA) is best for event types that aim to acquire net-new leads (sponsorships, partner events) or events with very short sales cycles. Single-touch includes two significant touchpoints:

First-Touch Attribution fully credits the campaigns responsible for lead conversion, so you know which ones deliver results.

Last-Touch Attribution focuses on the last touchpoint that led to conversion, so you can know what decision triggered an actual conversion.

Multi-Touch Attribution – (MTA) allows a marketer to have a broader view of the attribution ecosystem. It requires a more unified view of customer data and is perhaps the most powerful and accurate attribution model type. Multi-touch can be divided into three significant touchpoints:

Linear Attribution focuses on each touchpoint before the conversion. For example, suppose your prospect visited your website directly, filled out a contact form, downloaded a lead magnet, and opened an email pre-event message. In this scenario, linear attribution credits all these events that led to the ultimate conversion.

U-Shaped Attribution focuses on the first and last touchpoints. For example, you would ascribe more significant weight to a lead's initial site visit, pre-event actions, and final conversion than to any activities in between.

W-shaped attribution focuses on the middle point in the customer journey. It's an excellent fit for companies with longer sales cycles.

Step 2: Identify the Right Attribution Model to Make Your Event Data Truly Actionable

FINAL TIPS FOR USING ATTRIBUTION MODELS

An attribution model that assigns fixed weights to various touchpoints will not accurately reflect the details of your customer's journey because *no two journeys are exactly the same*.

Be open to **switching models** to meet changing situations, needs, or different types of buyers.

Make sure that whatever model you use, **it's flexible enough** to allow for measuring additional or other types of touchpoints in the future.

Step 3: Get Teams Aligned Around Event Data

If you don't have a solid team aligned around your event and data strategy, your ability to effectively measure and prove ROI will be greatly decreased. You need all team members and departments that have any involvement with an event to be fully informed about event goals, and all of these people need to work cooperatively to reach them.

Marketing should work closely with marketing operations, sales, and customer success teams to ensure that the right data is collected, stored, and acted upon throughout the event cycle. This cross-functional collaboration allows for tighter team alignment around campaign launches, real-time event data collection, and follow-up. It aids with utilizing event intelligence insights to optimize future campaign strategies and build stronger, more effective marketing programs.

Step 3: Get Teams Aligned Around Event Data

ABM FOR SALES & MARKETING ALIGNMENT

To reach conversion goals that ultimately benefit the entire company, marketing teams must **employ strategies that meld the expertise of sales and marketing** to designate desired prospects, engage with leads, and close deals.

As an event marketing strategy, Account-based marketing (ABM) supports the initial efforts of your marketing team to gather valuable data about attendee interests, engagement, and actionable metrics that are later shared with the sales team. This information is then used to improve the quality of follow-up efforts and shorten the sales cycle.

As your sales team continues to engage promising leads, your marketing team offers further support via customized content and messaging developed from intelligence gathered during the event. This content can take the form of on-demand streams, samples, or special offers delivered at just the right time according to behavioral data collected about a lead.

ABM is not a new concept, but it's experienced a resurgence due to the proliferation of digital technologies that make it easier to pursue. It's a powerful cooperation tool that's almost guaranteed to increase ROI, so any savvy event marketer should keep it in their playbook.

Step 3: Get Teams Aligned Around Event Data

DATA-DRIVEN CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Another strong trend bolstered by digital technology is **the effort across industries to deepen the relationship with their customers**. To get the most out of the buyer data you've gathered in and around an event, share this information with your company's customer success (CS) team. This will arm them with a clear data story around how and where customers are engaging with the company — and what this means about their current needs or pain points.

Like the sales team, the CS team will use your event metrics to support follow-up, but with an eye on the long-term nurturing of the customer relationship. This will extend a customer's life-time-value to your company while also helping your customer reach better outcomes with your products or services.

Step 4: Unify & Visualize Your Event Data

In the age of Big Data, data silos are your arch-nemesis. They cut teams off from accessing information that could make their missions more achievable; they also weaken the data that exists within each silo.

In most cases, the incredible benefits unified data bring to a company far outweigh any temporary negative experience that may come from dismantling silos and switching technologies. With event marketing, unified data allows event marketers a powerful 360-view of every aspect of your event workflow, event programming, and event life cycle. Facilitating easy access of data from a centralized location means that collaboration can be more efficiently accomplished in an ABM strategy.

It's important to note that it's not enough to simply have all data lumped together into an aggregate "data lake." To make metrics as useful as possible for all team members, a centralized event management platform needs to be scalable and easy to use. The platform should support queries that return structured, semi-structured, and unstructured real-time and historical data. This provides enough flexibility to allow for all team members to gather insights that support the joint mission of capturing higher ROI.

Step 4: Unify & Visualize Your Event Data

SHOW THE IMPACT OF YOUR EVENTS PROGRAM WITH DATA VISUALIZATION

In order to truly measure your event program's success and business impact, you need to **visualize the most effective marketing channels for driving registrations, meetings and business results**. Key visualizations include:

SINGLE EVENT

Insights from a **Single Event** can answer the following questions:

- *Did we meet our goals (attendance, business outcome, ROI etc.)?*
- *Who registered for this event?*
- *Who attended the event?*
- *Who engaged with us?*

EVENTS PROGRAM

Insights from an **Event Programs** can answer the following questions:

- *What topics were the most engaging? Who should we invite?*
- *What accounts engaged across the series?*
- *Does engagement lead to positive outcomes?*
- *What content should we share (live and on-demand)?*
- *What call-to-action should we offer?*

ACCOUNT-BASED

Insights from an **Account-Based** can answer the following questions:

- *What accounts engaged with us across events?*
- *What questions are our strategic accounts asking?*
- *What patterns of account participation and activities lead to positive outcomes?*

BENCHMARKS AND PREDICTIONS

Insights from a **Benchmarks and Predictions** can answer the following questions:

- *How many attendees should we expect?*
- *Where should we hold the event (in-person) and/or at what time?*
- *What business outcome can we forecast?*

Step 5: Maximize ROI with Event Intelligence

Throughout this playbook, we've demonstrated how event intelligence provides insights into the various points of engagement that transpire at every stage of the event lifecycle. **Your event intelligence is the key to determining if programming goals were met and whether an event delivered provable value for your company.**

We've also touched on the role of having the right strategy and the best event management technology in helping marketers gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of event guests' thoughts, behaviors, and intent.

The capabilities of your chosen event software will ultimately dictate to what extent you can execute a strategy and collect and analyze the rich attendee data needed to maximize your ROI.

Step 5: Maximize ROI with Event Intelligence

CERTAIN'S EVENT INTELLIGENCE ON DISPLAY

A 360-degree view of the customer journey is essential to gauging and driving a higher return on investment. Most event management technologies on the market are limited in functionality; this leads to marketing teams investing in multiple applications just to craft a solution that gives them something close to what they need. In such a setup, precious bandwidth inevitably ends up wasted on simply maintaining, using, and learning the system.

Ideally, teams should centralize all of their event data collection, unification, and analysis needs under one technology solution, leaving them free to focus on strategy and execution. Certain's full-stack event experience management platform is favored by B2B businesses across industries because it fulfills this exact need while meeting all the expected requirements of a robust, cloud-based solution.

Certain's Event Intelligence a turn-key solution, the only events-focused intelligence engine in the events marketing space, transforms your attendee engagement data into actionable insights—allowing you to track, visualize and optimize all your global events in real-time and take intelligent actions to help increase your ROI, all in one platform.

Step 5: Maximize ROI with Event Intelligence

Certain's **powerful data engine** allows you to convert your event data into clear, informative visuals that are specific to your unique business goals. This allows you to easily track key performance indicators such as:

Who registered for each session and who attended?

What are your attendees' titles, companies and industries?

How many attendees to expect & what outcomes to forecast for future events?

What organizations engaged with you across events / how did you attract them?

Did you meet your event goals and ROI?

How does your event's registration pace compare with past events?

What topics/content are most engaging?

What sessions resonate with what positions or industries?

Step 5: Maximize ROI with Event Intelligence

CREATE BETTER FUTURE EVENTS

Certain's Event Intelligence solution allows marketers to tell more complete stories that encompass the entire ecosystem of actions that transpire within and around an event. This level of insight will enable teams to proactively improve and refine marketing, sales, and customer success strategies that ultimately increase the profitability of your business. As the industry's only true event data platform, Certain's Event Intelligence transforms your event engagement data into actionable insights that boosts your global events ROI. It allows you to:

01 Capture & Analyze your Attendee Data Across your Entire Event Portfolio

02 Visualize, Track and Optimize your Global Events in Real-time

03 Offer Highly Engaging & Personalized Attendee Experiences at Scale

04 Gain Insights into All your Events (Virtual, Hybrid & In-person) in One Platform

05 Take Intelligent Actions to Help Increase ROI & Drive Better Business Outcomes

Conclusion

The average cost of marketing events places them under greater scrutiny from C-Suite; for this reason, it's incumbent upon event marketers to have sound strategies for clearly and confidently proving ROI. The same event intelligence that allows for accurately measuring ROI is also a high-value asset for gaining deep insights that can be used to increase your company's return on investment.

Robust software is required to gain the maximum benefit that Big Data can provide for your event intelligence. Thankfully, there is no need to embark on a lengthy research and development project to cobble together a bespoke event intelligence and event management system. When it comes to finding the right solution to manage your events, the trick is to look beyond logistics and to identify the features that lead to quality, actionable data and buyer insights from your events.

Certain's event management platform, powered by a robust event intelligence engine, provides event marketers with a powerful, turnkey solution that's feature-rich and customizable to match your company's unique event marketing strategy. See your entire event portfolio performance in one program that empowers you to measure, track and optimize your events and ultimately improve your attendee experience.

Learn more on how to drive engagement, capture, manage and analyze your event data, and better optimize your future events.

How can we help with your next event? Schedule a demo to find out!

SCHEDULE A DEMO